

BANTHA TRACKS

JOURNAL OF THE OFFICIAL STAR WARS/LUCASFILM FAN CLUB

THE OPTICAL DEPARTMENT

PART TWO: MAINTAINING THE ILLUSION

In the last issue of BANTHA TRACKS, we talked to Bruce Nicholson, Supervisor of the Optical Department at Industrial Light & Magic, about Optical's work. In this issue, we continue discussion with Bruce and other members of the department. They include Optical Line-up persons Tom Rosseter, Peg Hunter, Ed Jones, and Ralph Gordon; John Ellis, Optical Photography Supervisor; Louis Rivera, Assistant Film Lab Technician; Kenneth Smith, Head Optical Printer Operator; Don Clark, Optical Printer Operator; Jeff Doran, Film Lab Technician; Tim Geideman, Lab Technician; James Lim, Optical Printer Operator; and Dave Berry, Optical Photography Supervisor.

Someone once compared the Optical Department to a heart, because all the veins of ILM lead there eventually. It's really more like the last link in a chain.

The chain starts with the design of a special effects shot. On a Lucasfilm movie, this is done by George Lucas and the head of the Art Department. All the parts, or elements, of the shot are photographed, one part at a time: live action, blue screen, miniatures, matte paintings. The shot then goes to the editors, who decide how all the individual pieces of film will go together. When the shot comes to the head of the Optical Department

from editorial, it comes as the original negative and a workprint, which is a kind of rough and dirty copy. The workprint has the editors' synchronization information (for matching sound and so on), and the negative is used to make intermediate printing elements. The head of Optical assigns the shot to a line-up person, who puts it all together, and a cameraman shoots it. That's the end of the chain. When Optical is done, ILM is done—the film is ready to be made into the print that will be shown in your neighborhood theater.

Basically Optical's job is to take all the pieces of film for each shot, stick them together photographically, through the intermediate prints, and erase the seams so they look like one single photo. Actually putting the film into the printer for the final composite is one of the last steps. Then it's balanced and

"tweaked" a little more so the elements are the right color and look like they belong in the background into which they're being inserted. That's the hard part.

"We're constantly adjusting and changing to make all these little pieces of film look like they were photographed at the same time. Then we hope we have someone editing it, like George, who can look at the shot and say, 'Okay, great! It'll only be on screen a second,' so you don't have a chance to really stare at it and see that it looks like a model or whatever. Having a real fast pace helps, too."

Even Optical can't work miracles. "An optical department can make a good shot look bad, but not necessarily the opposite. To us,

continued inside . . .



Kerry Nordquist

The "Optical Dogs". Left to right. Top row: Brad Kuehn, Don Clark, Mike Shanon, Peg Hunter, and James Lim. Middle: Jeff Doran, Tom Rosseter, Louis Rivera, Dave Berry, John Ellis. Bottom row: Ed Jones, Bruce Nicholson, Jim Hagedorn, Ralph Gordon.

B A N T H A T R A C K S



Interview: The Optical Department (continued)

every little step in the way the shot is designed is critical, because if any one of the steps is not done well, it often shows up.

"If it isn't a real strong shot, with the negative properly exposed, properly framed, and perspectives between the different pieces of film matched properly, we can't make it look good. We can patch it up, but it still goes out with Band-Aids and splints."

Still, Optical can sometimes save a shot that can't be saved any other way. The "imploding house" sequence in *POLTERGEIST* is a good example. The miniature effect could have only one take, and it was under-exposed by 1½ stops on the camera. This made it too dark to match the background. It was impossible to reshoot the element (the miniature) because it would take months to prepare for another try. So Optical printed the element brighter in the optical printer, while printing the background darker. That produced an exceptional balance in the final composite.

You might think that some movies might have shots that are generally easier to do, but to Optical, every movie has its hard shots and its

easier shots. "You never know. Some shots you think are going to be so easy, but when they come in they're real difficult. The sand skiff scene in *RETURN OF THE JEDI* is a good example. That was one of the toughest sequences to do, and it was the last one done. It should have been one of the first."

Or take the mine chase sequence in *INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM*. "People in the theater think we found some mine and shot the sequence there. But a lot of it's really a little miniature cave 2½ to 3 feet wide. There were also sets where they shot close-ups on full-size mine cars with people in them; three main characters in one and the bad guys in the other.

"We see those mine cars as they really look. Then we have the model right next to them. The model has to look exactly like the real thing, has to work exactly, because the audience has something to compare it to."

"A shot like this has two problems. It's a realistic setting, so people will recognize it. And the real version is sitting right next to it. So there may be only two elements in that shot, instead of 50 spaceships, but it's real tough to match."

"Usually the shots that are the hardest aren't the ones with lots of spaceships, but the ones with real people standing around in front of a desert or something. Those cause us more problems than a space shuttle. Shots that involve what we know to be true on Earth are harder because they have to be absolutely accurate, as opposed to a shot in outer space, where we don't know what it really looks like."

"Something like the Rancor pit monster is not real, so if he looks green or blue or purple or whatever, people will just say, 'Oh, he's supposed to look like that.' If we turned Han Solo or any of the other characters green or purple, we'd be in trouble!"

Fortunately, not every shot turns out to be harder than Optical expects. Some are easier, like the speeder bike chase through the forest of Endor in *RETURN OF THE JEDI*. "It was so well thought out

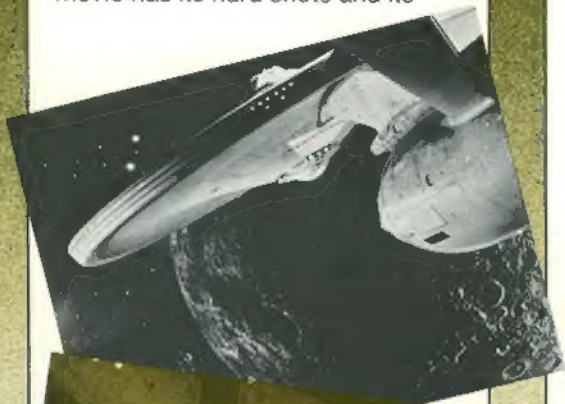


and photographed that it was the first effects sequence to be finished on that picture. The speeder bikes look like they're actually going through the forest."

"And then there's what we call a 'take one final.' That's a composite shot that's accepted by the effects supervisor in dailies on the first take that is shot. That's the ultimate. When it happens, you remember it." Other shots may go to as many as 18 takes.

There are other things Optical remembers too—like making mistakes. "We line up a shot (get it ready for optical printing), maybe 40 frames (less than two seconds) long. We start shooting with the camera and spend four or five hours on the shot. Then we realize we have a mistake. We're under a big time crunch: maybe it's 7 o'clock at night and the film has to go to the lab at 11. Holy smoke, what are we going to do?"

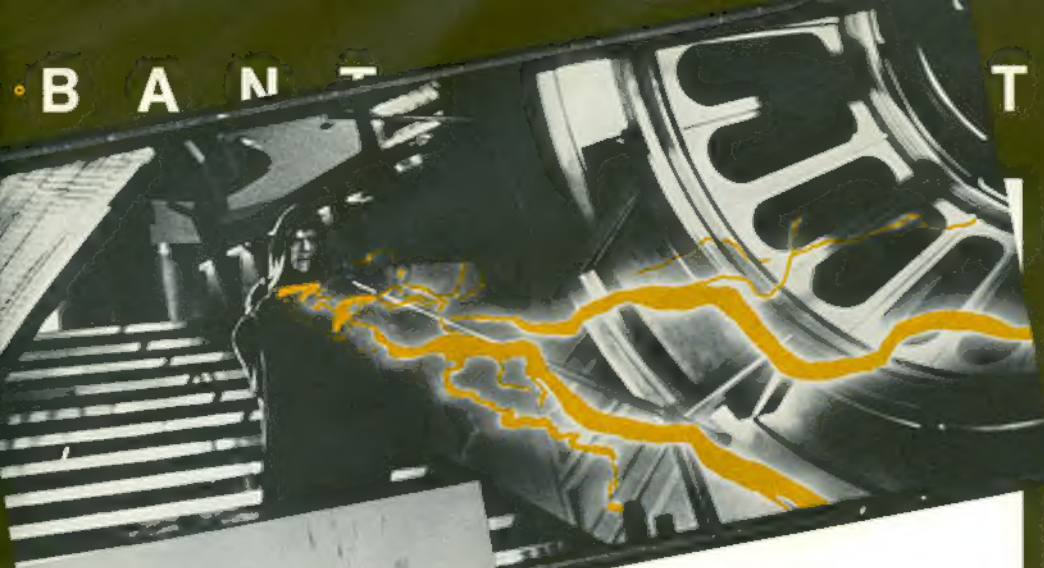
"That's when our job really becomes kind of fun. We have to make the decision about what to do. Do we throw out the four hours of work we've already put in, because we just can't do that shot tonight? Do we gamble that in the next four hours we can go ahead and maybe save the shot? Maybe we can flop things around, or use other mattes, or run some things backward."



Battle scene from *STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN*.



Carbonite thaw effect from *RETURN OF THE JEDI*.



Jabba's Barge blows up on the roof top of ILM.

"We can go to the other people in Optical, too—it's all kind of a team effort here. We'll get Dave over there helping do one thing, and Bruce will cut pieces of film apart and put different pieces in the shot. And that clock up there just keeps ticking."

"Then it's time to report to the lab. Even if we're in the middle of the shot, when the editors say, 'We're going to the lab,' that's it, we have to stop. To buy more time, we might use little tricks like pushing the hand of the clock back five minutes. When the editors come in to tell us it's 11 o'clock and they have to be at the lab, we can say, 'No, it isn't, we've still got five minutes left.' Even one more minute might let us finish the shot."

"Hopefully in the end we patch up that mistake so that the people in the audience can't see it. Of course, sometimes we just can't. Optical can throw out something like a blue-screen shot if it is not exposed properly. But if there is a problem with action or composition, we have to consult the effects supervisor first."

Sometimes the problem may not show up right away. "We may work eight hours on a shot, with hundreds of passes through the camera, and make a mistake in the first 10 minutes. But we don't know it until the next day in dailies. We

sink down in our seats, and we're embarrassed, but that's part of optical effects."

"And one of the great things about working here is that there are no recriminations for mistakes. Some people feel bad themselves about it, but nobody is chewed out, nobody is made to feel bad if something they spent a lot of time on doesn't look right on screen. We try to fix it. This starts right at the top and goes all the way down. It is understood that this stuff is really complex and some things will go wrong. You know we're always pushing here, and not getting in trouble for making mistakes gives us a chance to do a lot better."

The dailies at which the film shot the day before is viewed are held every morning. They are attended by the key people involved in a show or a shot. On his movies, George Lucas is often there also. "George knows exactly what he

wants. There may be a shot we worked on for three or four hours, so we know everything in it. It comes on screen, and George takes his pointer and says, 'There's a problem there.' We're looking for a matte out of sync or something, but he says, 'That planet has to be about 2½ fields lower.'* He knows the whole film, and he knows where that planet is going to be from shot to shot to shot. He has it all in his head.

"The good thing about George is that he knows when to quit, too. He knows when something is just the way he wants it, whether we think it's perfect or not. There could be a technical problem or something, but he knows where the shot is in the film, and he knows it is going to work."

"For example, there's the part in RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK where the trucks are chasing the jeep, and the jeep goes over the cliff and the guys fall out. We always thought it was a funny-looking shot. But in dailies, George said, 'Oh, it's fine.' George knew exactly where the audience was going to be when that jeep went off the cliff, and he

continued inside . . .

The imploding house from POLTERGEIST.



One of ILM's memorable sequences, the possessed bedroom from POLTERGEIST with spinning records, flying books, lamps that twist through the air and a closet with a "living" light.

BANTHA TRACKS PRESENTS

RANDOM ACCESS

THE 1985 STAR WARS/LUCASFILM CONTEST

In 1981 and 1983 the Star Wars/Lucasfilm Fan Club held Creativity Contests to honor the countless STAR WARS/LUCASFILM enthusiasts who continue to send us artistic efforts inspired by the STAR WARS and INDIANA JONES movies. These models, paintings, drawings, and photographs decorate our offices, providing the entire Lucasfilm crew with special enjoyment.

But it has occurred to us that many of you weren't able to take part in these two past contests for many reasons—ranging from a lack of time to, perhaps, the misbelief your artistic efforts were not up to par. Because we'd like to include as many people as possible; and because it would be just good fun, we have created RANDOM ACCESS, a contest anyone with a force number can enter.

RANDOM ACCESS is just what it sounds like, random access to our prize packages listed below. It's a random drawing so everyone can take part. Please read and follow the instructions and rules carefully before returning your entry. Good luck!

1. All current STAR WARS/LUCASFILM Fan Club members are eligible to enter except for employees of Lucasfilm Ltd., and their immediate family members.

2. Fill out the entry form with your name, address, and Force Number. Your Force Number is above your name on the mailing label. It starts with your zip code followed by a string of letters and numbers based on your name and address. Members outside the USA have a seven-digit Force Number.



3. Carefully remove the entire form from this page by separating at the perforated lines. Fold as indicated, staple, affix postage, and mail.

4. Entries mailed from outside the USA should be folded and stapled as above and sealed inside an envelope for actual mailing. We will unseal the envelope and add your folded entry to the others.

5. All entries must be postmarked no later than October 1, 1985.

6. All entries must be submitted on this, the official entry form. Photocopies or facsimiles will not be accepted for eligibility.

7. 100 names will be randomly drawn from all eligible entries by select Lucasfilm cast and crew members.

8. The first five entries drawn will be given their choice of the prize packages detailed below. We will notify the first five winners by phone. The other winners will be notified by mail.

9. All 100 winners' names will be published in BANTHA TRACKS issue #30. Your entry constitutes permission to publish your name and city/town in Bantha Tracks.

Fill out on back side



SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

SALE

SKYWALKER JACKET

HAN SOLO VEST

Special Products Order Form

Send check or money order to:

STAR WARS/Lucasfilm Fan Club, Dept. BT 28
P.O. Box 163
Mt. Morris, IL 61054

Important Ordering Information for all Customers:

Orders are payable by check or money order to the Official STAR WARS/Lucasfilm Fan Club. No cash is accepted. Canadian and foreign orders must pay in U.S. funds only. California and Illinois residents add applicable sales tax. Please allow 3-5 weeks for delivery. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Prices are valid for 90 days and are subject to change thereafter. The STAR WARS special products are for members only. Commercial resale of these items is prohibited. We reserve the right to limit quantities.

NOTE: SINCE WE LIMIT SPACE FOR SPECIAL PRODUCTS AND PLACE A GREATER EMPHASIS ON BT CONTENT, WE HAVEN'T PROVIDED PHOTOS OF EACH SPECIAL PRODUCT IN EACH ISSUE. IF YOU DON'T REMEMBER WHAT SOME OF THE PRODUCTS LOOK LIKE, SEND A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE (SASE) TO THE STAR WARS/LUCASFILM FAN CLUB, P.O. BOX 163, DEPT. BROCHURE, MT. MORRIS, IL 61054 AND WE'LL MAIL YOU A SPECIAL PRODUCT BROCHURE.

ALL SPECIAL PRODUCTS HAVE BEEN REDUCED 25% TO 50% / PLUS YOU'LL RECEIVE A FREE SURPRISE COLLECTOR'S ITEM GIFT WITH EACH ORDER!!!

Name

Address

City

State

Postal/Zip Code

Country

Force Number

Amount Enclosed

		Item	Size	Quantity	U.S.	Canada	Foreign	Total
VEST	V	Sm. Child's	4 5 6 6x		\$19.95	\$20.95	\$21.95	
	V	Child's	7 8 10 12 14		\$21.95	\$22.95	\$23.95	
	V	Big Boy's	16 18 20		\$25.95	\$26.95	\$27.95	
	V	Women's	S M L		\$25.95	\$26.95	\$27.95	
	V	Men's	S M L XL		\$29.95	\$30.95	\$31.95	
T-SHIRT	T	Child's	S (6-8) M (10-12) L (14-16)		\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	
	T	Adult's	S M L XL		\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	
JACKET	S	Sm. Child's	4 5 6 6x		\$19.95	\$20.95	\$21.95	
	C	Child's	7 8 10 12 14		\$21.95	\$22.95	\$23.95	
	B	Big Boy's	16 18 20		\$25.95	\$26.95	\$27.95	
	W	Women's	S M L		\$25.95	\$26.95	\$27.95	
	M	Men's	S M L XL		\$29.95	\$30.95	\$31.95	
PATCHES	YOD	RETURN OF THE JEDI Yoda Patch			\$ 3.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 5.00	
	PAT	Vader Patch			\$ 2.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 4.00	
	HOP	New Hope Patch			\$ 2.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 4.00	
	LOG	STAR WARS Logo Patch			\$ 1.25	\$ 1.50	\$ 2.50	
	RAI	RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK Patch			\$ 2.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 4.00	
	FPS	STAR WARS Five Patch Set (PAT LOG HOP RAI YOD) (\$10.25 value—save \$4.25)			\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	\$ 8.00	
ONE-SHEETS	THX	THX One-sheet			\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	
	EWK	THE EWOK ADVENTURE One-sheet			\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	
	EWB	CARAVAN OF COURAGE One-sheet			\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	
	STR	TEMPLE B-sheet			\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	
	IND	INDIANA JONES One-sheet			\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	
	SWB	RETURN OF THE JEDI B-sheet			\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	
	JPS	JAPANESE ROTJ Half-sheets			\$ 3.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 5.00	
	JRE	JEDI rerelease of One-sheet			\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	
MISCELLANEOUS	PO2	JEDI Poster Album			\$ 2.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 4.00	
	PO1	EMPIRE Poster Album			\$ 2.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 4.00	
	SCI	B.T. Compilation Issue (1-4)			\$ 1.00	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.50	
		Bantha Tracks Back Issues circle issues desired 005 006 007 008 009 010 011 012 013 014 015 016 017 018 019 020 021 022 023 024 025 026			\$ 1.00	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.50	
	BTS	B.T. SET (SCI-027) (\$23.00 value—save \$13.00)			\$10.00	\$11.00	\$12.00	
California and Illinois residents only TAX								
TOTAL								



THE OPTICAL DEPARTMENT, Part II Continued

knew they wouldn't notice what we thought were problems. And he was right. People cheered and went crazy—they loved that shot!"

"George also knows when to throw something away if it doesn't look very good. Like most of the good directors, he can separate himself from the shot, look at it objectively, decide it's mush—and out it goes! It may have cost a hundred thousand dollars, but better to throw out the hundred thousand dollars than to leave in a hundred-thousand-dollar mistake. The end result is a better picture."

Nineteen eighty-five is turning out to be a busy year for the Optical Department. "We're working on several shows. We have six directors, six producers, six deadlines, six different looks, and probably six different kinds of effects in all of them! We've got COCOON, GOONIES, BACK TO THE FUTURE, THE YOUNG SHERLOCK HOLMES, ENEMY MINE, and EXPLORERS."

"In each film we do, we do a little bit more and a little different kind of work. We joke about it. If you walk down the hall at ILM and look at all the pictures we've worked on, there are about a dozen out there now. We call it our two-billion-dollar hall, because it represents about two billion dollars of ticket sales."

"The people who saw those films and enjoyed them believed what they saw. They could suspend their disbelief. The films didn't work just because of Optical; maybe we were the smallest part. But they worked and we held up our part of it. That's what's important."

*A frame of film is divided into fields, or areas, like latitude and longitude lines divide up a map. These fields can be used as frames of reference for composition in an effects shot.



GETTING INTO THE BUSINESS

Don't Give Up!

To many readers of BANTHA TRACKS, the people who work at ILM have enviable jobs. We get hundreds of letters asking about ILM and jobs there, more than about almost any other subject. We asked the Optical Department people we interviewed to tell us something about their backgrounds and Optical Department jobs.

Optical jobs are broken down into functions, such as optical printer operator, optical line-up person, or lab technician. There are union categories, and the people who work in them belong to the International Photographers Union. An optical supervisor has overall responsibility for composite shots on a particular movie.

The work is not as glamorous as it sometimes sounds. It's very hard, especially on movies that have hundreds of optical effects shots. Optical technicians may find themselves working from seven or eight in the morning until 11 at night for months on end.

The people in ILM's Optical Department have a variety of backgrounds. Many of them didn't start out to work in optical effects or even have a particular interest in optics or photography, though all of them were interested in the film industry.

John Ellis, Optical Supervisor, actually started out as a machinist, making special effects equipment for his father's company. Then he decided that the people using the equipment had more fun than he had building it, so he became an assistant cameraman for another company. He also experimented on his own and visited different studios to learn even more.

Ed Jones, Optical Line-Up, studied art at first, but became disenchanted with visual design drawing and switched to film and television production. He took some special effects courses in college, and then made documentary films funded by government grants.

Ken Smith, Optical Printer Operator, earned a masters degree in film production from the famous University of Southern California

film school—"but that's worth about 45 cents." After college, he worked for a while for a man who manufactured optical printers.

Ralph Gordon, Optical Line-Up, was lucky enough to find an internship at a photo effects company while he was in college. "I went on my hands and knees and said I'd even work for free!" he recalls. The internship gave him several months of hands-on experience, and when he graduated the company offered him a full-time job. It was only as a gofer, but Ralph used it to learn "everything in the operation." He next got a job as an assistant cameraman, and when he was laid off from that job, started calling around and sending out his resume.

Tom Rosseter, Optical Line-Up, had a background in theater as a child, and studied theater and broadcasting in college, especially technical areas. He worked as a television camera operator after college, picking up films wherever he could. He was a freelance camera assistant when Bruce Nicholson hired him for ILM. He had no specific experience in optical effects, but he thinks that could almost be an advantage at ILM, because it has a very different system from most optical houses.

A common thread in everyone's stories is persistence: calling around and sending resumes for months, not giving up when the first answer is "no." Ken Smith also advises patience, especially having the patience to wait until the time is right. He got an interview at ILM within three days of sending his resume because he applied at just the right time.

Getting as much experience in related areas is also important. "Don't even worry about credits," Tom says. "Do the job as well as you can. Even if you don't get the credit for a job, at least you learn something so the next time something comes along, you can do it better. Work really hard, and somewhere along the line, somebody is going to have an opening for you."

The final piece of advice the Optical Department people have is to do what you love. "Follow what you're interested in and work very hard at what you love doing," Ken says. "Eventually you'll get someplace. Maybe it won't really be where you hoped to be, but it will be someplace that you'll want to be."

■ Bev Clark

BANTHA HISTORY

In every issue of BANTHA TRACKS you'll find a drawing of the giant beast ridden by the Sand People. In the lingo of publishing, that drawing and the Bantha is our logo. We thought you'd like to know a bit more about the Bantha and what she's up to these days.

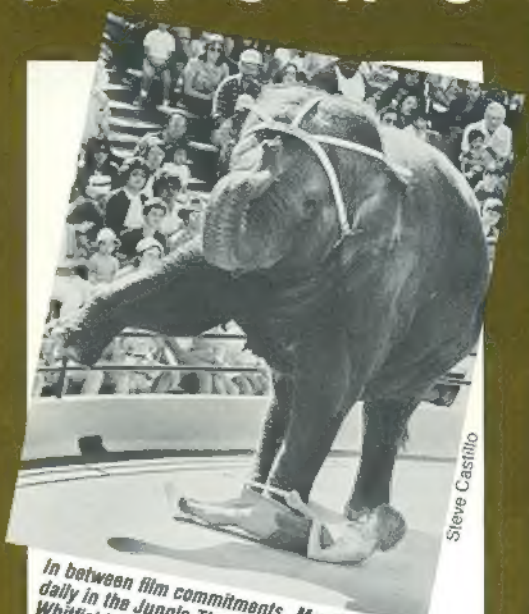


On the left is the Bantha costume supported by a rack. Its famous model, Mardji wonders what she'll be dressed as next.

Anyone who has seen the eight foot tall, 30 feet long Bantha knows it is not actually a living animal. But, when the Bantha was on public display, most people began looking for the gears, wheels, and motors that the Lucasfilm crew must have designed to run the giant beast. Most are surprised to learn it's not a machine either; but, rather, a costume. A large costume worn by a movie veteran named Mardji.

Mardji (Hindi for Margie) is a large actress, so the 300 pound Bantha costume wasn't too much for her. Mardji weighs 8500 pounds. She's an Asian elephant now living at Marine World/Africa U.S.A. in San Mateo County, California.

www.JEDI-TEMPLE-ARCHIVES.com



In between film commitments, Mardji performs daily in the Jungle Theatre. Here, Roxanne Whitfield asks Mardji to take a walk without

The Bantha costume was built on a howdah—essentially an elephant saddle. The long shaggy fur hanging down the Bantha's flanks were made from palm fronds painted a dull brown. Those splendid curving horns are flexible tubing and the long tail was made from jointed pieces of wood covered with thick bristles. The long Bantha beard covered Mardji's trunk, but sometimes it poked through.

Marine World's Jungle Theater Director Ron Whitfield told us it wasn't a problem since Mardji's list of standard tricks includes sticking her trunk in her own mouth. Whitfield said it took an hour to dress Mardji in the Bantha costume, aided by a peck of her favorite apples.

Mardji still gets those apples just before her daily appearance in the theme park's Jungle Theater as she leads the elephant parade. She is always introduced as a star of the



Bantha on location with George Lucas in Death Valley, CA, and/or, Bantha eyes box of donuts near George's knees.

STAR WARS movie. Now 33 years old, Mardji has been featured in other film work. She wore a huge shaggy dog costume for the Walt Disney movie THE SHAGGY DOG (a BIG shaggy dog) and is the elephant enjoying Skippy Peanut Butter in that firm's TV commercials. She has also appeared as herself—an elephant—in commercials for Isuzu automobiles and Macy's department stores.

Whitfield said that Mardji "really enjoyed" her STAR WARS role. "She loves to travel and the Bantha scenes were shot in Death Valley." She'll see more traveling soon as Marine World/Africa U.S.A. moves to a new location in Northern California, the city of Vallejo.

■ Jak Church

LEFL NEWS

DAVID BOWIE JOINS LABYRINTH

Versatile rock star, actor, and composer David Bowie has been signed to star in the new motion picture LABYRINTH, in a role written especially for him. As one of only two live actors in the spectacular fantasy film, Bowie will perform in LABYRINTH as well as write some of the songs. Jim Henson is directing and George Lucas is serving as executive producer of this Henson Associates/Lucasfilm Ltd. Production for release by Tri-Star Pictures in Summer 1986.

NEW TV SERIES STARS STAR WARS STARS

Lucasfilm has entered the world of Saturday morning television with two new animated series debuting in September on ABC. EWOKS will follow the adventures of the young Wicket on the forest moon of Endor. And, DROIDS: THE ADVENTURES OF R2-D2 and C-3PO recounts the days before everyone's favorite robots met Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia.



Between the rise of the Empire and their heroic missions in the STAR WARS movies, R2-D2 and C-3PO had many owners. The new DROIDS episodes will be grouped in four-week packages. In each program group, R2-D2 and C-3PO will have a new owner and new missions to complete. The stories will focus on high adventure and comedy told from Artoo's and Threepio's point of view.

The theme of the comedy adventure series is friendship. Although Artoo and Threepio are radically different in design and programming, they have a fond attachment for each other. That friendship, along with loyalty to their new owners, is the most important thing on their side as they out-manuever and outwit villains ranging from evil droids and monsters to gangsters and petty tyrants.



EWOKS will take us through a wondrous land of fantasy and imagination; of places beautiful or bizarre; of delights and dangers. Leading us through the forest of Endor is the Ewok scout, Wicket. With his family and friends, Wicket had many adventures in the days before the Empire came to Endor; and EWOKS will share them with us.

Along with Wicket, Princess Kneesaa, Teboo, Latara, Paploo, Logray, and Chief Chirpa will deal with life, love, and friendship as well as the Night Spirit. In ancient times, the Ewoks say, the Night Spirit touched the minds of their distant cousins, the Duloks, making them deceitful and rather nasty. The community of Ewoks must always be on guard for the Duloks and other hostile animals and tribes in the dense forests of Endor.

Executive producer for both series is Miki Herman, longtime Lucasfilm associate and Unit Production Manager for RETURN OF THE JEDI. EWOKS and DROIDS will be animated by Nelvana, Ltd., of Toronto. We'll discuss the series' different "looks" and other behind-the-scenes work in upcoming editions of BANTHA TRACKS. In the meantime, watch your local listing for the September premiere.

■ **Jok Church**

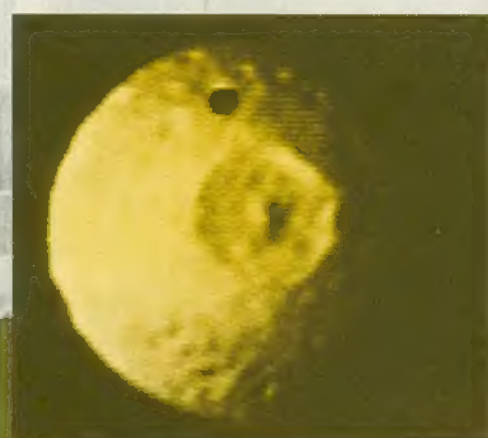
CONGRATS!

Lucasfilm's THE EWOK ADVENTURE has been given two prestigious television awards. The International Television Movie Festival has named THE EWOK ADVENTURE as the recipient of its award for "Best Children's Production" for 1984.

The television movie also won the "I.T.V.M.F. Technical Gold Medal" for special effects! Congratulations to the cast and crew!

TRIVIA

On November 12, 1980, scientists at Jet Propulsion Laboratory were amazed as this image scanned across their monitor screens. As the picture of Saturn's moon 'Mimas' took shape, they realized it looked like another familiar celestial object—The Death Star.

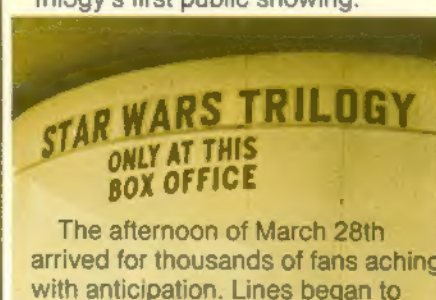


Office of Public Information, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Pasadena, California 91109

STAR WARS TRILOGY: A SITE FOR SOARING EYES

Star Wars Fans Report

The rumors began a few weeks before. "The Trilogy," they whispered. "It's coming!" A mysterious sign had been placed in front of several theaters in the United States and Canada announcing a STAR WARS triple feature. Clinching speculation, members of the Official Star Wars/Lucasfilm Fan Club were the first to receive confirmation that nine cities would host the international event. Hollywood, Westwood, San Francisco, Toronto, Denver, Chicago, New York City, Dallas, and Seattle were the lucky targets of the Trilogy's first public showing.



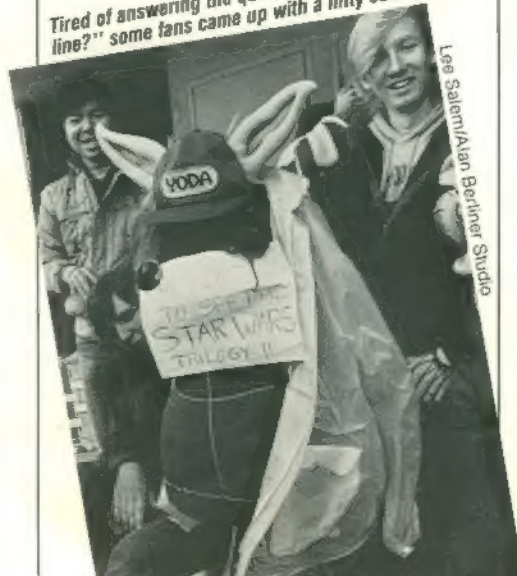
The afternoon of March 28th arrived for thousands of fans aching with anticipation. Lines began to form as early as the 27th. Many of you attended and reported on the events in line and the thunderous reception the blockbuster triple bill received inside. Fan Club members were our news correspondents for the Trilogy and this is their report.

The special one-performance-only screening of the Trilogy was presented as a benefit for PBS, the Public Broadcasting System with special focus on PBS's children's programming—a special concern of George Lucas. Every one of the nine locations was sold out; the theaters were packed, with not an empty seat to spare.

Connie Nichols of Southgate, California, reports everyone got a special oversized souvenir ticket. She says that ticket and a special souvenir button passed out inside the theaters was worth the admission fee alone.

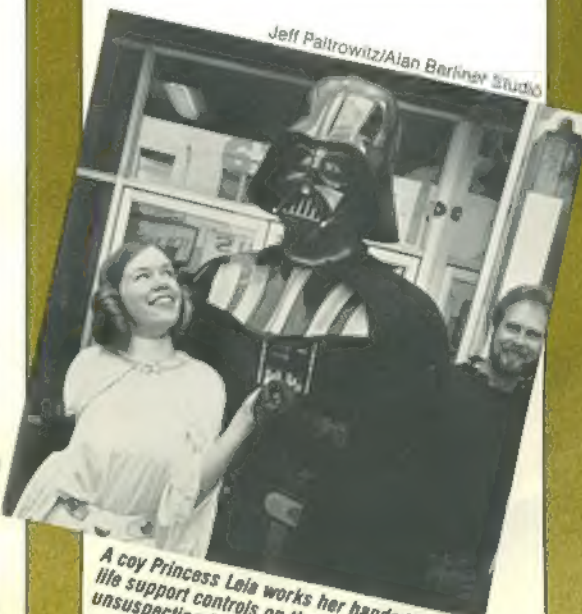
Being there in a big screen theater for all three movies was very important to Fan Club member Kathy Farmer of Texas, who convinced her family simply renting video tapes of STAR WARS and THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK would pale by comparison. Their drive to Dallas' Northpark Theater proved her right. The THX Sound System, she says, "was unbelievable."

Tired of answering the question, "Why are you in line?" some fans came up with a nifty solution.



Jeff Pallrowitz/Alan Berliner Studio

Lee Salem/Alan Berliner Studio



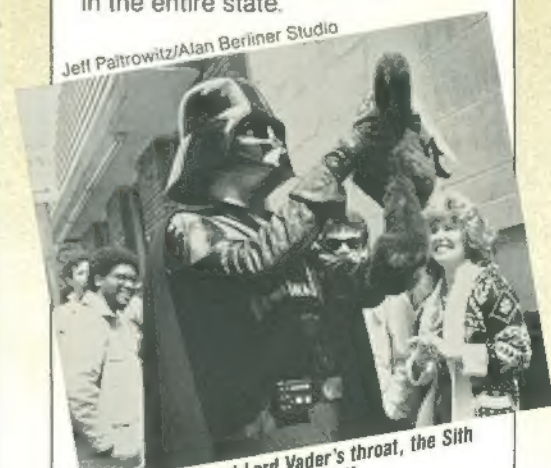
A coy Princess Leia works her hands towards the life support controls on the chest of an unsuspecting Lord Vader.

Other fans seeing the Trilogy with THX Sound were equally impressed. Letters from fans used words like, "awesome," "spectacular," and "breathtaking."

Many Fan Club members thanked us for their special notice confirming the one-time performance of the Trilogy. Susan Tucker of Downey, California, says, "Without notice I wouldn't have had time to make necessary arrangements at work to attend." Likewise, Micheala Hafner from Seattle, Washington, says with the Fan Club letter she had time to take off from her job. Dean Aguilar of Lompoc, California, told us he wouldn't know about the Trilogy at all. All we can say is, "That's what we're here for!"

Of course, many fans couldn't attend for many different reasons. Richard Depping from Flushing, New York, wrote to say the Trilogy started too late in the afternoon. His mother, Susan, dropped us a line to reaffirm it and to ask for an earlier showing for "younger fans" some time in the future.

Kay Kay from Vilborg, South Dakota, writes that she and brother Roger couldn't attend because the Trilogy wasn't shown in any theater in the entire state.



As Wicket leaps at Lord Vader's throat, the Sith Lord struggles to defend himself.

Even those who attended overwhelmingly urge a second presentation of the Trilogy. "We emerged from the theater triumphant, exhausted, exhilarated, and wishing we could experience it all again—right away!" one fan wrote.

Fan/Reporter Karl Kern from Aurora, Colorado, looks ahead. Not only did he ask for another Trilogy screening; but adds, "About two years after the third Indiana Jones film comes out, I would be willing to see a triple feature of those films!" Judging by the response from the Trilogy, it's a pretty safe bet Karl isn't alone in that opinion.

■ **Jok Church, Victor Koman**

THE 1985 STAR WARS/LUCASFILM CONTEST

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EDITORIAL

Dear Members:

Many of you have written to ask if there will be more STAR WARS films. Even though this question is repeatedly asked, it is still difficult to answer.

Most of you are devoted to the films. George Lucas and the people who worked on STAR WARS (A NEW HOPE), THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, and RETURN OF THE JEDI are devoted to these films as well. They devoted over ten years of their lives to their successful completion.

The process was all consuming. Mega-movies, like the STAR WARS series, take enormous amounts of creativity, time, and energy. Having made this commitment and having completed the three segments of the STAR WARS Trilogy, George has decided to address other film-making priorities.

Filmmakers, like other artists, learn from each of their works. George learned a great deal from THX-1138 and from AMERICAN GRAFFITI and took that knowledge on to his subsequent work. Much has been learned from STAR WARS. In fact, the three films changed the way movies are filmed, sound is produced, and footage is edited. It is time to apply these lessons to new projects, as well.

There will be more STAR WARS movies. But, that is in the future, and right now no one can say when the next film will be produced, or even which portion of the STAR WARS Saga will be produced first. Currently, there are no present production plans, which means the creative field for the remaining films is wide open. When such plans are made, we will tell you about them in BANTHA TRACKS.

In a recent message to his co-workers, George said that Lucasfilm would choose projects based on their artistic merits, and then have Lucasfilm do its production work better than anyone else can. The lessons learned from creating the STAR WARS films makes this possible.

It also guarantees that any film bearing the Lucasfilm Ltd., mark will be as fine a film as it could ever be. Lucasfilm is already at work fulfilling this goal. Very soon you will be able to view new film ventures that live up to the high standards of quality established by the STAR WARS Trilogy.

Carefully remove along perforated line.

Debuting this September on ABC Television are two action-filled animated series. They are THE EWOKS and DROIDS: THE ADVENTURES OF R2-D2 AND C-3PO. In our next issue we'll interview Miki Herman, the Executive Producer of these two new shows. Other film projects include LABYRINTH, a Henson Associates/Lucasfilm Ltd. co-production. LABYRINTH is an exciting and fun-filled story of a young girl's hazardous journey through a Labyrinth (or multi-walled maze) on a desperate rescue mission and a race against time. Also, Lucasfilm Ltd. is in production on a second live action EWOK MOVIE which will air this fall. We'll keep you posted as new projects are developed!

We look forward to your continued support and interest. May the Force be with you!

Maureen Garrett, Director
 STAR WARS/LUCASFILM Fan Club

Special Services

HOW TO WRITE TO US

Letters to the editor, pen pal forms, cast and crew fan mail, requests for SPFX, THX update, modelmaking, costume guidelines, science fiction convention, and club info: Official STAR WARS/Lucasfilm Fan Club, P.O. Box 2202, San Rafael, CA 94912 U.S.A.

VERY, VERY IMPORTANT!

Many times it is impossible to respond to letters because people forget to tell us who they are, so please remember to include your name, address and force number each time you write to us. Whenever possible, for a faster response, please enclose a SASE with your letter of inquiry.

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CAST AND CREW FAN MAIL FORWARDING

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Your current force number is above your name on the mailing label. It starts with your zip code followed by a string of letters and numbers from your name and address. UK/European members—your force number is a seven digit number.

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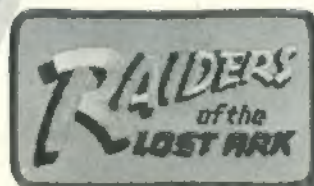
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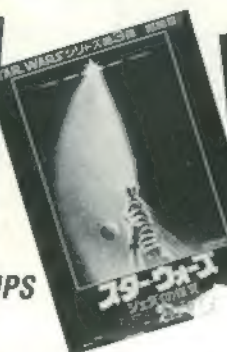


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ONE-SHEETS



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Preview of BANTHA TRACKS 29

EWOKS & DROIDS Animation Interview: Executive Producer Miki Herman

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